



FEMA

City of Washington Voluntary Buy-Outs

Washington, MO- Flooding in the summer of 1993 uprooted thousands of people and destroyed or damaged their property. People and animals were caught in raging waters, causing many deaths. The high water damaged millions of acres of agricultural land, devastated towns and businesses, cut off water supplies, and knocked out roads, bridges and railways. Since then, the State of Missouri has taken steps to remove people from harm's way. The State has currently acquired nearly 5,000 homes through voluntary buy-outs administered by the State and FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

Since the 1993 floods, the State of Missouri continued to experience flooding in several different parts of the State. On May 7, 2000, in Jefferson and Franklin Counties, over a foot of rain fell in the early morning hours, suddenly transforming normally quiet little creeks into walls of raging torrents of water, carrying off cars and mobile homes, killing two people and swamping many homes in several communities and rural areas. The part of the Missouri River that caused most of the damage in 1993 had lower than normal levels for the most part. This time it was the small creeks and rivers that caused so many problems for the sleeping residents of these two Counties.

In 1993, among the numerous buy-outs that were funded and administered by FEMA and the State of Missouri, funding was approved for a buy-out project in the City of Washington. The City of Washington considered elevation and the construction of a protective levee, but the final decision, made by a consensus of the local residents and the community leaders, was to buy-out the property owners and deed restrict the land so that no further development would occur. The project was forwarded to the State and FEMA and consisted of the voluntary acquisition of five residential structures.

This project has been a great success for the City of Washington. When flooding began again in May of 2000, none of the homes that once stood in the buy-out area were affected. Costs of warning, rescue, and evacuation were avoided. Building repairs and personal property losses were far less costly. Homeowners, once terrified by the rising waters, may not have even heard about the problems until they listened to the news broadcast the next morning. The area is now a neighborhood park with basketball, tennis courts, and a playground for children.

The total cost for this project was \$508,503. According to the City, all of the homes involved in the buy-out would have received a substantial amount of flooding had they remained. After only 7 years, the project benefited tax payers by saving more than \$1.1 million in disaster assistance, warning, rescue and evacuation. The most important benefit, however, is the removal of people from harm's way.



Franklin County,
Missouri



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$505,503.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)